

VZCZCXRO5365  
RR RUEHDE RUEHDIR  
DE RUEHMK #0777 3250702  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 200702Z NOV 08  
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8258  
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0319  
RHBVAKS/COMUSNAVCENT  
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS MANAMA 000777

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

FOR NEA/RA AND G/TIP  
BAGHDAD FOR AMBASSADOR ERELI

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KTIP](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SMIG](#) [BA](#)  
SUBJECT: TIP INTERIM ASSESSMENT - CORRECTED COPY

REF: A. HENZEL-NEA/ARP E-MAIL (9/2/2008)  
[1](#)B. STATE 109257  
[1](#)C. MANAMA 539 AND PREVIOUS  
[1](#)D. MANAMA 770  
[1](#)E. NEA/ARP - HENZEL E-MAIL (11/18/2008)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Per ref E request, post is transmitting a re-classified version of this assessment.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Summary: This message provides post's input to the Trafficking In Persons (TIP) interim assessment. Paragraphs are keyed to ref B para 6A questions. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Question (a): The GOB established a new unit to combat human trafficking under the economic crimes unit at the Criminal Investigative Directorate. The Human Trafficking Unit (HTU), comprised of two men and eight women, appears to view female victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation as its priority. The Bahraini authorities have welcomed offers of training and investigative assistance from the local office of the U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). HTU reports that it has referred several cases of possible human trafficking to the Public Prosecution, which determined that only one of these cases met the legal standard set by the anti-trafficking law enacted in January 2008. The HTU has a Thai woman in custody who the GOB charged with trafficking three other women. The court will conduct a final hearing in the case against the Thai woman on December 23. The victims provided testimony against the suspect to the HTU and Public Prosecution, and then were repatriated at their request.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Question (b): The law required the GOB establish two committees, one for policy development, headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and one for victim support, headed by the Ministry of Social Development. The Minister of Social Development established the victim support committee in August. It has not yet developed a formal victim identification procedure. According to the Public Prosecution office, investigators attempt to ascertain if migrant workers were forced or coerced into conducting any activity, legal or illegal, or had their freedom of movement restricted in any way.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Question (c): The three victims mentioned above provided written testimony against the defendant, and were repatriated at their request.

[1](#)6. (SBU) Question (d): The GOB launched a new migrant labor visa regime and spent considerable time and money explaining the new system to the public. The system allows for workers to change employers, shifts the responsibility for "runaway" workers to employers, and criminalizes the use of so-called "free visas," the former technically illegal but widespread

practice under which a Bahraini sponsors held a worker's visa and "allowed" the worker to find their own work and accommodations for a fee. The new regime is designed to force employers to register their workers. The changes should end some former abuses, but they do not yet apply to domestic household workers. Despite numerous statements from the Minister of Labor and from the CEO of the Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) that the practice of holding passports is illegal, it remains common. The Migrant Workers Protection Society, an NGO, reported that administrative clerks at the courts confirm that the practice was legal. Sexual exploitation of any kind is illegal.

17. (SBU) Question (d), continued: The HTU produced a flier describing the new anti-trafficking law and soliciting complaints to its hotline. The GOB distributes the flier at the airport. The LMRA continued to expand the material available on its website, [www.lmra.bh](http://www.lmra.bh), in numerous languages to enable migrant workers to know their rights under the new system. The LMRA worked with the International Organization for Migration to develop an information brochure for all incoming workers. IOM reports that the brochure is in its final draft form.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Visit Embassy Manama's Classified Website:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/manama/>  
\*\*\*\*\*  
HENZEL